

January 4th, 2006.

SALEM COUNTY REORGANIZATION MEETING

This is like your first date.....Now what do I do? I know that my brother Clint is looking down on this festive evening and saying "Leroy, what have you gotten yourself into?" It's an extreme honor for me to sit in the same seat that Clint sat in as Director of the Freeholder board. I'll be the first to admit that I don't have the experience of a Ben Timberman, Joe Dyer, Tom Pankok, or a Charlie Ahl, but I do understand people, and I do know what it takes to work together as a team. It is this old coach's job to bring this team together and prepare us for the season ahead. I am honored to be a part of this winning team, and I look forward to the challenges that lie ahead.

I would like to thank my fellow Freeholders for their steadfast support. The only thing that I ask of this Freeholder Board is that before entering our meeting room, we leave our party affiliation at the door and do what's best for all of the people of Salem County.

Tonight, we are extremely grateful to be surrounded by family, friends, and honored guests during this evening's meeting. I especially want to extend a warm welcome to our two good friends, Senator Sweeney and Assemblyman Burzichelli, who have again come to the Garden Spot of the Garden State to be a part of this special night. I would like to thank Judge Norman Telsey and Ben Telsey for presiding over the swearing-in ceremony and to our good friend, Reverend Dorn, for giving the invocation.

Salem County is moving forward and that would not have been possible without our former Freeholders laying the groundwork for our successes today. I would like to acknowledge our former Freeholders who are in attendance tonight:

- 1. The gentleman and statesman---Ben Timberman**
- 2. My good friend of fifty years---Jack Kugler**
- 3. The common man---Walter J. Kern**
- 4. Former Freeholder Director and State Assemblyman who has always been in my corner---Tom Pankok**
- 5. Joe Dyer, Sr. and Leo Fredericks**

I would also like to recognize our retired Surrogate, a Salem County Icon, who gave 44 years of service to Salem County---Ms. Geneva Wood; Former County Clerk---John Cawman; Former Prosecutors---Judge Ferrel, Frank Hearst, Ron Epstein, and John Berg. I would like to acknowledge our present county officers: County Clerk---Gilda Gill and our newly elected Surrogate---Nicki Burke. Our law enforcement community is second to none in the state, and that is due to the leadership of these men: Sheriff Cooksey and Prosecutor Lenahan.

I would like to thank my good friend and former classmate, Dr. Pete Contini, and the entire Salem Community College for being such gracious hosts tonight. Please stand Dr. Contini. Thank you to the countless others, including our Town Crier, Ron LeHew, Boy Scout Troop # 60, Pennsville Historical Society, the Harvest Community

Bank for sponsoring the floral arrangements, and our musical trio who have worked so hard to make this a memorable ceremony.

I would be remiss if I didn't thank Debby Turner-Fox and the entire Clerk of the Board Staff for working numerous hours in putting tonight's successful program together.

And finally, I would like to thank my family that is here this evening: Mom, Patti, and my three children, as well as, my late brother Clint and father Preston, who have provided me with strong roots and a support structure that I rely upon as I carry on the Ware Family Tradition of serving the people of Salem County.

As we move into the business portion of our meeting, I want to congratulate Freeholders Bobbitt and Sullivan on their re-elections. I also would like to congratulate newly elected Freeholder Dave Lindenmuth and Surrogate Nicki Burke.

I want to thank everyone who has accepted an appointment to work with us in this coming year. I guarantee it will be an exciting one that will be rewarding for all of us.

Thank you.